

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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DECEMBER 7, 1973

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TAGS: PINT, UK(N.I.)

SUBJECT: LOYALISTS FORM NEW COUNCIL TO OPPOSE NI CONSTITUTION

ACT

SUMMARY: SOME 600 DELEGATES FROM VARIOUS LOYALIST ORGANIZATIONS
DECEMBER 6 FORMED NEW UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL TO COORDINATE
OPPOSITION TO CONSTITUTION ACT, EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL OF IRELAND.
UUUC SEEMS LIKELY TO IMPROVE COORDINATION OF LOYALIST ACTIVITIES,
THOUGH IT WILL HAVE NO CONTROL OVER THOSE OF UVF OR UDA, AND WILL
NOT SOON LEAD TO FORMATION OF PAN-LOYALIST POLITICAL PARTY. LOYAL-
ISTS WILL BE ABLE TO DISRUPT ASSEMBLY UNTIL NEW STANDING ORDERS ARE
PASSED PERMITTING THEIR EXPULSION; IN EVENT OF THEIR EXPULSION
LACK OF OPPOSITION TO EXECUTIVE WOULD DAMAGE LATTER'S CREDIBILITY,
AND ATTITUDE OF ULSTER UNIONISTS COULD BE CRUCIAL. EXTRA-
PARLIAMENTARY TACTICS ARE LIKELY TO INCLUDE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE
AND RIOTING, AND CRAIG PRIVATELY PREDICTS CIVIL WAR IN WHICH
REPUBLICANS MIGHT BE KILLED OR DRIVEN OUT OF NORTH. SUCH A
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CONFLICT COULD WELL ALSO INVOLVE INTERNAL STRIFE BETWEEN ANTI-
AND PRO- CONSTITUTION PROTESTANTS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN A MEETING DECEMBER 6 AT ULSTER HALL IN BELFAST SOME 600

DELEGATES FROM VARIOUS LOYALIST ORGANIZATIONS FORMED A UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL TO COORDINATE OPPOSITION TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND CONSTITUTION ACT, THE EXECUTIVE AND THE COUNCIL OF IRELAND.

2. REPRESENTED AT MEETING WERE VANGUARD AND DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTIES, NEW ULSTER UNIONIST ASSEMBLY PARTY AND OTHER DISSIDENT ELEMENTS OF UNIONIST PARTY, ORANGE ORDER, APPRENTICE BOYS OF DERRY, ROYAL BLACK PRECEPTORY, AND INDEPENDENT ORANGE ORDER.

3. FIRST RESOLUTION OF MEETING STATED THAT NEW EXECUTIVE REPRESENTED THREAT TO UNION AND WOULD LEAD TO ALL-IRELAND REPUBLIC. IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT ALL UNIONISTS AND LOYALISTS ACT TOGETHER TO REJECT NEW FORM OF ADMINISTRATION PROVIDED UNDER CONSTITUTION ACT 1973 AND SEEK CONSTITUTION THAT EFFECTIVELY SAFEGUARDS ULSTER HERITAGE AND RIGHT TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. ACCORDINGLY, DELEGATES WERE COMMITTED TO FORMATION OF UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL TO PROVIDE COMMON LEADERSHIP AND POLICIES IN WHICH THEIR RESPECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS WOULD BE ASSOCIATED. STEERING COMMITTEE WAS APPOINTED TO PREPARE CONSTITUTION FOR NEW COUNCIL.

4. SECOND RESOLUTION SAID EXECUTIVE ENVISAGED BY CONSTITUTION ACT 1973 SHOULD BE MADE UNWORKABLE, AND IN NO WAY SHOULD ASSISTANCE BE GIVEN TO THE ASSEMBLY TO MAKE POSSIBLE THE FUNCTIONING OF SUCH AN EXECUTIVE. ESTABLISHMENT OF COUNCIL OR IRELAND SHOULD ALSO BE OBSTRUCTED.

5. COMMENTS:

A. ONCE ORGANIZED, NEW COUNCIL WILL PROBABLY IMPROVE COORDINATION AMONG THE VARIOUS LOYALIST POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS. IT MAY ALSO INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES AND VIEWS OF PARAMILITARY LOYALIST ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE UDA AND UVF, BUT LATTER IN PARTICULAR IS WELL BEYOND THE CONTROL OF ANY DEMOCRATIC LOYALIST POLITICIAN.

B. TALK OF A NEW PAN-LOYALIST POLITICAL PARTY IS PREMATURE BECAUSE OF CONTINUING PREOCCUPATION OF ULSTER UNIONIST ASSEMBLY PARTY (EX-UNPLEDGED UNIONISTS) AND THEIR SUPPORTERS WITHIN UNIONIST PARTY WITH EFFORT TO REVERSE THE OFFICIAL UNIONIST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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POLICY OF POWER-SHARING AND UNSEAT BRIAN FAULKNER AS LEADER. HOWEVER, BASENCE OF SUCH A PARTY DOES NOT MATTER MUCH IN PRACTICAL TERMS; LOYALISTS ALREADY VOTE TOGETHER IN ASSEMBLY, AND NO DOUBT MUCH ANTI-EXECUTIVE ACTIVITY WILL TAKE PLACE OUTSIDE CONVENTIONAL POLITICS.

C. UNDER PRESENT STANDING ORDERS ASSEMBLY IS POWERLESS TO CONDUCT BUSINESS IF ANY SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS DO NOT WANT IT TO. ORDERS AUTHORIZE SPEAKER TO ORDER REMOVAL OF DISRUPTIVE MEMBER ONLY FOR ONE SITTING; WHEN A GROUP OF MEMBERS DISRUPT THE ASSEMBLY, SPEAKER'S ONLY RECOURSE IS TO ADJOURN. DURING DEBATE ON STANDING ORDERS, OFFICIAL UNIONIST AMENDMENT TO GIVE THE SPEAKER WESTMINISTER-TYPE POWERS WAS

DEFEATED BY A LOYALIST-SDLP COALITION. REPORTEDLY THE SDLP HAS NOW CHANGED ITS MIND, AND NEW STANDING ORDERS COULD BE ADOPTED TO EMPOWER ASSEMBLY TO EXPEL MEMBERS. HOWEVER, AS PAISLEY POINTED OUT TO CONSUL AND VISITING EMOFF DECEMBER 5, ASSEMBLY WITH EXECUTIVE BUT NO OPPOSITION WOULD LACK CREDIBILITY. IN THIS EVENT, ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR OF NEW ULSTER UNIONISTS COULD BE CRUCIAL; THEY HAVE THUS FAR NOT JOINED IN LOYALIST DISRUPTION IN ASSEMBLY, AND ONE OF THEIR MEMBERS DEPLORED PHYSICAL ATTACKS ON UNIONISTS IN DECEMBER 5 ASSEMBLY SESSION. ULSTER UNIONIST JOHN LAIRD TOLD US DECEMBER 4 THAT HIS PROBLEM WAS TO KEEP LOYALIST POLITICAL INITIATIVE IN HANDS OF POLITICIANS RATHER THAN LOSING IT TO STREETS AS HAPPENED IN HIS WEST BELFAST CONSTITUENCY AFTER DIRECT RULE IN 1972. THUS ULSTER UNIONISTS MIGHT WISH TO REMAIN AS CONSTITUTIONAL OPPOSITION TO EXECUTIVE IN ASSEMBLY EVEN AFTER DEPARTURE OF LOYALISTS, BUT LATTER WOULD CERTAINLY PRESSURE THEM TO LEAVE ASSEMBLY.

D. LOYALIST EXTRAPARLIAMENTARY TACTICS, ACCORDING TO PAISLEY IN DECEMBER 5 TALK WITH US, ARE LIKELY TO INCLUDE VARIOUS FORMS OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE; RIOTING AGAINST EXECUTIVE MEMBERS, PARTICULARLY UNIONISTS, WHEN THEY VISIT LOYALIST AREAS; AND RENEWAL OF VIOLENCE BY ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS UVF. PAISLEY WARNED US HE WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT CONDEMN SUCH VIOLENCE, WHICH WOULD BE THE FAULT OF HMG WHO HAD TREATED LOYALISTS AS SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS AND HAD NOT ALLOWED CONSTITUTIONAL MEANS OF PROTEST AGAINST CONSTITUTION ACT. CRAIG DECEMBER 4 TOLD US HE EXPECTS "CIVIL WAR" IN WHICH LOYALISTS WILL RISE UP, KILL REPUBLICANS OR DRIVE THEM OUT OF NORTHERN IRELAND AND FORCE HMG TO RECOGNIZE SITUATION ON GROUND. PAISLEY'S DENUNCiations OF FAULKNER AND HIS COLLEAGUES AS "TRAITORS" AND LOYALIST

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PHYSICAL ATTACKS ON THEM IN ASSEMBLY CONSTITUTE VIRTUAL INVITATION TO FURTHER VIOLENCE BY ANTI-CONSTITUTIONALISTS AGAINST PRO-CONSTITUTION UNIONISTS REMINISCENT OF IRISH CIVIL WAR OF EARLY 1920S.

E. BOTH BRITISH ARMY PRESS SPOKESMEN AND RUC CHIEF CONSTABLE TOLD US IN LAST FEW DAYS THAT LOYALIST TERRORIST GROUPS SUCH AS UVF AND UDA COULD WELL DO "SOME VERY NAST THINGS" AGAINST CONSTITUTION ACT AND ITS SUPPORTERS. UNIONIST EXECUTIVE-DESIGNATE MEMBER BASIL MCIVOR ALSO PREDICTED DECEMBER 1 ELEVATED VIOLENCE IN COMING PERIOD.

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